

Message Text

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TAGS: FAO, OCON

SUBJ: U.S. PARTICIPATION IN FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCES

REF: ROME 19908

1. THE FAO COUNCIL DISCUSSED ITS AGENDA ITEM 24 ON PARTICIPATION OF MEMBER NATIONS AT FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCES FOR TWO HOURS AND 25 SPEAKERS. DUE TO CAREFUL ADVANCE CONSULTATIONS, THE DEBATE WAS MOSTLY STATEMENTS OF THE NEED TO CLARIFY THE QUESTION OF FAO MEMBERS PARTICIPATING AS FULL MEMBERS IN MORE THAN ONE REGIONAL CONFERENCE. THE LATIN AMERICAN SPOKESMAN, PERU, EARLY EXPRESSED THE NEED TO RESOLVE THIS PROBLEM, BUT THAT IT WAS COMPLICATED AND NEEDED TO BE STUDIED BY A WORKING GROUP OR THE FAO'S COMMITTEE ON CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL QUESTIONS. THE LATIN AMERICAN SPEAKERS DISTINGUISHED BETWEEN PARTICIPATION IN REGIONAL TECHNICAL BODIES WHERE AS MUCH EXPERTISE AS POSSIBLE IS DESIRABLE AND REGIONAL POLICY BODIES WHERE MEMBERSHIP SHOULD BE RESTRICTED TO COUNTRIES LOCATED WHOLLY WITHIN THE REGION. THE US PARTICIPATION AS A MEMBER OF THE LA REGIONAL CONFERENCE WAS SELDOM REFERRED TO SPECIFICALLY.

2. THE US DELEGATE'S INTERVENTION WAS IN SUPPORT OF THE LA PROPOSAL FOR THE CCLM OR A SPECIAL WORKING GROUP TO STUDY THE PROBLEM. WE EMPHASIZED THE COMPLEXITY OF THE PROBLEM, THE FACT THAT PRESENT PRACTICE WAS WORKING WELL IN OUR VIEW, AND THE NEED TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN DIFFERENT REGIONS, TYPES OF MEETINGS,
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AND LEGAL BACKGROUND.

3. UNFORTUNATELY THE DEBATE BECAME MORE HEATED AFTER THE DUTCH REP TOO STRONGLY DEFENDED THE KINGDOM OF THE NETHERLANDS DUTY TO REPRESENT THE ANTILLES. A NUMBER OF AFRICAN DELEGATES RESPONDED ON COLONIALIS.

4. REGRETFULLY, THE MODERATES IN ASIA, THE SOUTH-WEST PACIFIC REGION, AND NEAR EAST KEPT THE DEBATE GOING BY EMPHASIZING THEIR REGIONS HAD NO PROBLEMS. OF SPECIAL ASSISTANCE WHERE FRANCE, TUNISIA, AND PAKISTAN AS EACH, FOR DIFFERENT REASONS, PARTICIPATES IN MEETINGS IN TWO REGIONS.

5. AFTER THE CHAIRMAN OF THE CCLM SAID HIS COMMITTEE WOULD NOT HANDLE A POLITICAL ISSUE LIKE THIS, THE INDEPENDENT COUNCIL CHAIRMAN, BULA HOYOS, SUMMED UP THE DEBATE ALONG THE LINES OF THE LA PROPOSAL UNTIL ON HIS OWN HE RECOMMENDED SENDING THE QUESTION TO THE WORKING PARTY ON THE COMPOSITION AND TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE COUNCIL. DESPITE OBJECTION FROM THE LA REGION AND THE DIRECTOR GENERAL WHO FEARS THIS PARTICULAR WORKING GROUP WILL SEEK WAYS OF CONTINUING ITS BUSINESS AND WHO ALSO EMPHASIZED THIS WAS SOLELY A LA ISSUE, THE INDEPENDENT CHAIRMAN GAVELLED THROUGH HIS PROPOSAL.

6. THE FINAL COUNCIL REPORT STATES . . . THE COUNCIL DECIDED TO REFER IT TO ITS "WORKING PARTY ON THE COMPOSITION AND TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE COUNCIL, THE PROGRAM COMMITTEE, THE FINANCE COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE ON CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL MATTERS" WHICH HAD ALREADY PROPOSED TO INCLUDE ON ITS WORK SCHEDULE AN ITEM RELATING TO REGIONAL CONFERENCES, THEIR COMPOSITION AND RULES OF PROCEDURE. THE COUNCIL DECIDED THAT THE WORKING PARTY'S STUDY OF THE PARTICIPATION OF MEMBER NATIONS AT REGIONAL CONFERENCES SHOULD TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION THE VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THE COUNCIL AND COVER THE QUESTION WHETHER ANY RULES THAT SHOULD BE DRAWN UP SHOULD APPLY TO REGIONAL CONFERENCES HELD FOR EACH REGION, OR ONLY TO THOSE HELD FOR A REGION IN WHICH PARTICIPATION HAD GIVEN RISE TO PROBLEMS. . .

7. CONVERSATIONS WITH MOST OF THE LATIN AMERICAN DELEGATES INDICATED FEW, IF ANY, HAD SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS ON THIS ITEM. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE LA REGIONAL MEETINGS OF PERM REPS TO THE FAO HAVE BEEN VERY DIVISIVE WITHOUT AGREEMENT BEYOND CALLING FOR A WORKING GROUP TO STUDY PROBLEM. THE LA GROUP IN ROME WILL BE MEETING TO SEEK AGREEMENT AND, WITHOUT INSTRUCTIONS, THE RADICAL/ANTI-US COUNTRIES (PERU, PANAMA, CUB, MEXICO) WILL WIN OUT WITH AN ANTI-US POSITION.

8. COMMENT: THE USG SHOULD CAREFULLY CONSIDER ITS POSITION

AND THEN SEEK SUPPORT FOR THE PRESENT STATUS QUO IN THE FAO.
A MORE GENERAL AND SERIOUS ASPECT OF THIS QUESTION IS THAT IT
SETS THE PRECEDENT OF REGIONS SETTING THEIR OWN MEMBERSHIP
AND THEREFORE LIMITING OR RESTRICTING MEMBERSHIP IN SUPPOSED-
LY GLOBAL UNITED NATIONS ORGANIZATIONS. REFTEL ILLUSTRATES
THE DANGERS AND WHIMSICAL NATURE OF SOME OF THESE DECISIONS.
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